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Department of State

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

(E858)

JAPAN-USSR: SUZUKI SEEKS REOPENING OF TALKS.

JAPAN-USSR: PRIME MINISTER SUZUKI'S OFFER ON 21 SEPTEMBER TO RESUME OFFICIAL TALKS WITH MOSCOW, WHICH HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED SINCE THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN, IS AN EFFORT TO FORESTALL OPPOSITION CHARGES

THE OVERTURE DOES NOT PORTEND ANY MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN TOKYO'S POLICY TOWARD MOSCOW. FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA WILL FORMALLY PROPOSE A REOPENING OF BOTH THE FOREIGN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AND WORKING-LEVEL TALKS DURING HIS MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO AT THE UN ON 23 SEPTEMBER. SINCE THE OTTAWA SUMMIT, SUZUKI HAS TAKEN A HARD LINE ON THE SOVIET-OCCUPIED NORTHERN TERRITORIES AND HAS ENDORSED THE US POSITION ON THE SOVIET THREAT. THE SOVIETS WILL WELCOME SUZUKI'S CALL FOR A DIALOGUE, BUT MOSCOW'S UNCOMPROMISING POSITION ON THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE WILL CONTINUE TO IMPEDE ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN BILATERAL RELATIONS.

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